

Amendments to the Specification:

Please amend the specification as follows:

On page 2, replace the paragraph beginning on line 8 with the following marked-up replacement paragraph.

FIG. 1 is a schematic perspective view of the interior of a vehicle having a vehicle seat, which may be disposed over a load floor system according to the preferred embodiment of the present invention, shown in a retracted position;

On page 3, please replace the paragraph beginning on line 5 with the following marked-up replacement paragraph.

Referring to As shown in FIGS. 1-5, a load floor system 10 (not visible in FIG. 1, see FIGS. 3-5) according to the preferred embodiment of the present invention may be installed in the rear portion of an extended-cab pickup truck under a set of forward-facing storable seats 12 with a “60/40 split.” The load floor system 10, of course, can be used in other environments, such as under side-facing jump seats of pickup trucks, under removable or retractable seats of a station wagon, sport utility vehicle or van, or in any other transporter with storable seats. The term “storable seat” includes seat assemblies that have a retractable or removable seat cushion. The term “60/40 split” refers to a common seating assembly that is split transversely in two sections, with a “sixty-percent section” for one or two passengers, and a “forty-percent section” for one passenger. Seating assemblies with a “60/40 split” allow one section to be used as a seat, and another to be stored. The load floor system 10 of the present invention can also be used under other seating assemblies, such as bench seats and so-called bucket seats. The system 10, however, is optimized as a two-section unit with a “60/40 split” installed under the set of forward-facing storable seats 12 with a corresponding “60/40 split.” Accordingly, these storable seats 12 will provide the background environment in the following description. Further, since the “sixty-percent section” of the load floor system 10 is nearly identical to the “forty-percent section”, only the “forty-percent section” will be discussed.

On page 3, please replace the paragraph beginning on line 21 with the following marked-up replacement paragraph:

The load floor system 10 may be used with a structural member 14 located under the storable seat cushion 16 near a front portion 18 (see FIG. 4) of the storable seat cushion 16. As shown in FIG. 2, the structural member 14 encloses two sides of a space or cavity 20, which is made accessible through the load floor system 10. The cavity 20 is further bound by a power train tunnel 22, by a so-called “waterfall” 24 between a lowered floor pan 26 and a raised floor pan 28, on the bottom by the lowered floor pan 26, and on the top by the storable seat cushion 16.

On page 4, please replace the paragraph beginning on line 5 with the following marked-up replacement paragraph.

In the extended position, the secondary panel 30, the access panel 32, the upper link 34, and the retractable panel 36 all cooperate to form the load floor 38, as best shown in FIG. 4. The second panel 30 is supported by a structural bracket 40 at one end and by the structural member 14 at the other end. Between the structural bracket 40 and the structural member 14, the secondary panel 30 forms a recessed portion 42 that accommodates and supports the upper link 34, as detailed below. The retractable panel 36 is supported by the connection to the upper link 34 at one end and by a leg panel 44 attached to the retractable panel 36 at the other end. The load floor 38 provides a generally flat surface to secure objects such as toolboxes, machine parts, or other cargo. The load floor 38 may include a tie-down 46 or other devices, such as hooks, clamps, or a hook and loop type fastener, such as VELCRO® strips, which function to secure objects to the load floor 38.

On pages 5-6, please replace the paragraph beginning on page 5, line 27, with the following marked-up replacement paragraph:

As shown in FIG. 6, a load floor system 10' of a first alternative embodiment of the present invention includes a folding panel 64 and a retractable panel 36'. In the retracted position, the retractable panel 36' abuts the structural member 14 and neatly tucks under the storable seat cushion 16 and rests on a structural bracket 40'. The load floor system 10' is

nearly hidden in this position and does not, in any manner, encroach on the leg area or floor space of the vehicle. In the extended position, the folding panel 64 and the retractable panel 36' cooperate to form a load floor 38', as best shown in FIG. 7. The folding panel 64 is supported by the structural bracket 40' at one end and by the connection to the retractable panel 36' at the other end. The retractable panel 36' is supported by the structural member 14 at one end and by a leg panel 44' attached to the retractable panel 36' at the other end. The load floor 38' provides a generally flat surface to secure objects such as toolboxes, machine parts, or other cargo. The load floor 38' may include a tie-down or other devices, such as hooks, clamps, or a hook and loop type fastener, such as VELCRO® strips, which function to secure objects to the load floor 38'.